

# When Plans Submittal Required

A building plans submittal is required to the Tennessee State Fire Marshal's Office (SFMO) sealed by a Tennessee registered architect or engineer based on a building's occupancy type, location, and whether the project scope meets the definition of Construction. [Rule 0780-2-3-.02 Submission of Plans]

## Occupancies Anywhere in Tennessee

The SFMO reviews and approves designer sealed building plans for new buildings, additions to existing buildings, change of occupancy projects, or building renovations anywhere in Tennessee:

1. **Educational** occupancies (schools) kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade
2. **Day Care** occupancies (child and adult) licensed by the Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS)
3. **State owned or leased** projects (state office buildings, universities, colleges, etc.)
4. **State agency licensing** when the agency identifies through law or rule that the SFMO must perform fire inspections (DHS, Tennessee Department of Children's Services (DCS), and Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities (MHDD))

## Additional Occupancies Outside Exempt Jurisdictions

The SFMO reviews and approves designer sealed building plans for new buildings, additions to existing buildings, change of occupancy projects, or building renovations that are located outside Exempt Jurisdictions:

1. **Assembly** occupancy of 300 or more,
2. **Residential or Business** occupancies three or more story buildings
3. **Residential** occupancies that are two story and with twelve units or more
4. **Correctional** facilities
5. **Enclosed Malls**
6. **High-Hazard Industrial (2006 IBC Groups H-1 and H-2 only; Excluding Storage)**

## Exempt Jurisdictions

The SFMO formally delegates codes enforcement to local jurisdictions who have demonstrated that it is adequately performing its building codes enforcement program. These jurisdictions employ staff to perform plans reviews and field inspections for buildings and structures to ensure fire and building code compliance that they have adopted by ordinance. [TCA 68-120-101(b)(2)] A SFMO audit team performs quality audits of each Exempt Jurisdiction once every three years. [Rule 0780-2-19-.04]

Alcoa  
Athens  
Bartlett  
Brentwood  
Bristol  
Chattanooga  
Clarksville  
Cleveland  
Collierville  
Columbia  
Cookeville  
Dyersburg  
Farragut

Franklin  
Gatlinburg  
Goodlettsville  
Hendersonville  
Jackson  
Johnson City  
Kingsport  
Knox County  
Knoxville  
Lebanon  
Madison County  
(Excluding Jackson)  
Maryville

Memphis/Shelby County  
Millington  
Montgomery County  
Murfreesboro  
Nashville/Davidson County  
(Excluding Oak Hill, Belle Meade, Forrest Hills, Berry Hill, and Lakewood)  
Oak Ridge  
Paris  
Pigeon Forge  
Sevierville  
White House

## **Definition of Construction**

Use the definition of Construction to determine whether a proposed project scope of work would require a plans submittal. [Rule 0780-2-3-.01 Definitions] The term "Construction" does not include excavation or site preparation.

Construction means:

1. The erection of a new building
2. An addition to an existing building
3. A change of occupancy
4. An alteration that alters the exit arrangement
5. Fire resistive assemblies
6. Type of Construction
7. Installation of fire suppression system
8. Installation of fire detection systems
9. Installation of fuel fired equipment

## **No Review Letter**

The SFMO issues No Review Letters for projects that because of the type of work involved do not meet the definition of Construction. This could be for a renovation project that does not meet the definition of construction or the work is minor in scope and code compliance could be handled in the field by the DSFM assigned to the project's county. Another example would be a new church facility or new addition to an existing church facility that may have less than 300 occupants.

To receive a No Review Letter, the owner/designer must submit a formal request with adequate information sent to a plans examiner for a determination and processing. It is very important to include vital information so that there are no problems encountered when the DSFM visits the site. The project is subject to a Stop Work Order if plans are required after the DSFM finds work underway and determines that the information provided does not match the scope of work being performed. The local building official does not issue a building permit without a No Review Letter when the SFMO has concurrent jurisdiction. The DSFM field inspector assigned to a project's county would be alerted to the new work and could perform inspections when necessary or visit the project site to collect information.

1. Provide cover letter explaining the scope of work and floor plan(s) for the proposed project. An e-mail with attached pdf letter and floor plan sent directly to a plans examiner is acceptable. Include the following information.
  - A. Name, mailing address, and phone number for individual submitting request
  - B. Project name, complete mailing address, county, and occupancy type
  - C. Owner representative's name and phone number for contact purposes so that a DSFM field inspector has access to the building
  - D. Written detailed description of the work to be performed
  - E. Floor plan of each floor level with the use of each space showing what type and where the work is located in the building
  - F. Show size dimensions of spaces and building size when occupant load determinations are required